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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2376 (2017), covers political and security developments in Libya, provides an overview of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the country and outlines the activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) since the issuance of my previous report on 22 August 2017 (S/2017/726).

II. Political and security-related developments

2. The reporting period was marked by a renewed dynamism and engagement by all Libyan actors to conclude the transitional process, following the launch on 20 September 2017, during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, of the United Nations action plan to resume an inclusive political process in Libya. Member States expressed a strong commitment to resolving the crisis in Libya and lending their political backing to the plan, while consolidating their ongoing efforts in support of the facilitation of my Special Representative for Libya, Ghassan Salamé.

3. To kick-start the implementation of the action plan, my Special Representative facilitated two rounds of consultations among representatives of the House of Representatives and the High Council of State to negotiate amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement. At the same time, my Special Representative engaged with a wide range of actors to discuss the next steps of the political transition and broaden support for and engagement in the political process.

4. The resumption of the Libyan political process under United Nations facilitation took place in a volatile security environment. While the ouster from Tripoli of armed groups opposed to the Government of National Accord marked some improvement to the security situation in the city, clashes continued to the west of the city between competing groups, particularly in Warshafanah and Sabratah and in the eastern city of Darnah. In Tripoli, clashes at Mitiga airport on 15 January 2018 were of particular concern owing to the high number of casualties and the fact that the clashes resulted in the closing of direct air traffic to and from Tripoli for a week.

5. At my request, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, visited Libya from 9 to 12 January and met with the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Head of the High Council of State,

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among others, to follow up on the implementation of the action plan and express my personal commitment to the resolution of the Libyan crisis.

Implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement

6. The objective of the United Nations action plan is to end the prolonged transition of Libya. There are three main elements to the plan: facilitate agreement on limited amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement to provide for a revitalized Government for the remainder of the transition; convene a national conference to revitalize the national polity and guide the remainder of the transition; and hold elections. At the same time, the plan is intended to reinvigorate Libyan institutions, engage armed groups, address urgent economic issues and promote local and national reconciliation.

7. The dialogue committees formed by the House of Representatives and the High Council of State met for the first time in Tunis on 26 September 2017. Each committee delegated members, including one woman, to form a joint drafting committee. The joint drafting committee agreed to a restructured Presidency Council and to an executive authority distinct from the Presidency Council. The drafting committee discussed various mechanisms to form the new executive authority but were unable to come to a consensus at the time of writing. On 10 November, UNSMIL presented the leadership of the House of Representatives and the High Council of State with a proposal drawing on elements that emerged from the talks to promote further dialogue between the parties and conclude the discussions on the executive authority. Both the House of Representatives and the High Council of State remain actively engaged and have met on at least four occasions on their own initiative.

8. On 6 December, a voter registration update was launched by the High Commission for National Elections to enable Libyan citizens to register and participate in any forthcoming electoral event. In preparation for the national conference, my Special Representative hosted a number of town hall meetings across Libya to hear from a wide range of interlocutors from the country's many constituencies.

9. The second anniversary of the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement was marked on 17 December. In addition to the issuance of a statement by the President of the Security Council on 14 December (S/PRST/2017/26), many other Member States publicly reiterated that the Agreement remained the only viable framework to end the Libyan political crisis.

International and regional engagement

10. International and regional engagement on Libya continued to play a vital role in supporting both the political process and the ongoing political transition.

11. My Special Representative attended the fourth meeting of the Ad Hoc High-level Committee on Libya in Brazzaville on 9 September 2017. On 21 September, the fourth meeting of the Quartet on Libya, composed of the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States and the United Nations, was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Quartet issued a communiqué that endorsed the United Nations action plan and resolved to continue to work together to ensure a common and complementary approach to addressing the challenges facing Libya.

12. On 17 December, Tunisia hosted a tripartite meeting between the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia. The Ministers voiced their full support for the work of the United Nations and urged all parties to work collaboratively to implement the action plan. Morocco also hosted my Special Representative for a round of meetings to discuss the situation on the ground and advance the action plan.

On 3 and 4 January 2018, my Special Representative visited Niamey to meet with President Mahamadou Issoufou and N'Djamena to meet with President Idriss Déby, who expressed their concerns about the situation in Libya and their strong commitment to and support for a resolution to the crisis.

13. On 15 January, my Special Representative visited Addis Ababa to engage with officials of the African Union to further strengthen the collaboration on Libya between the African Union and the United Nations. My Special Representative and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, discussed concrete ways to reinforce UNSMIL cooperation with the Commission, ahead of the African Union Summit. During my participation in the Summit, I, along with my Special Representative, also had an opportunity to exchange views with many African leaders on the impact of the crisis on the continent and on ways to redouble our efforts to promote a peaceful resolution to the crisis and stable governance.

Situation in the western region

14. There was significant military activity in western Libya during the reporting period. The Anti-ISIL Operations Room, a force affiliated with the Government of National Accord, took control of Sabratah from two militia groups in October 2017, after three weeks of intense fighting which resulted in 43 deaths and more than 300 injuries. On 31 October, the Government of National Accord-affiliated Commander of the western military region launched a military operation against the Libyan National Army-affiliated Fourth Brigade in Warshafanah, south-west of Tripoli, to secure the territory under the command of forces allied with the Presidency Council. The clashes continued for 11 days and resulted in 18 deaths. In January 2018, the same Commander launched an operation to extend the control of forces allied with the Presidency Council along the border area with Tunisia around Ra's Ajdir.

15. There were also a significant number of incidents in and around Tripoli, some of which centred around the airport and caused it to close, most recently in mid-January. In October 2017, clashes erupted between pro-Government of National Accord forces and opposing forces south of Tripoli, which resulted in the arrest of a leader who supported the former regime. In retaliation, the opposing forces seized control of the water network and cut its supply to Tripoli for approximately one week, which also affected the well at the United Nations compound. On 16 and 17 October, in the Ghararat neighbourhood, the Special Deterrence Force conducted a raid to shut down a drug-dealing facility, which devolved into armed clashes that resulted in 7 fatalities, including 1 civilian, and 11 injuries on both sides. Owing to the neighbourhood's proximity to Mitiga airport and the use of light and medium weapons, United Nations air operations were halted from 16 to 18 October.

16. On 17 December, the Mayor of Misratah, Mohamed Eshtewi, was abducted in the vicinity of Misratah airport by unidentified armed men, possibly due to an internal feud. Mr. Eshtewi's body, bearing multiple gunshot wounds and a blow to the head, was later found in front of a local hospital. Investigations are currently under way. UNSMIL strongly condemned the assassination of an elected civilian mayor.

17. On 15 January 2018, there was an escalation in the clashes between the Special Deterrence Force and the Al-Bugra militia, who launched a major assault on Mitiga airport. The attack reportedly was planned to free individuals held at the detention facility operated by the Special Deterrence Force at the airport base, and possibly was also intended to take over control of the airport. The fighting lasted hours and involved tanks and other heavy weapons. At least 23 fatalities and more than 60 injuries were reported. A number of civilian aircraft parked at the airport were lightly damaged in the fighting and the airport was subsequently closed for one week while the area was checked for unexploded ordnance.

Situation in the eastern region

18. There were intermittent clashes between the forces of the Libyan National Army and armed groups in the towns of Benghazi and Darnah. In Benghazi, after further fighting around the Sidi Khuraybish area, the Libyan National Army announced its liberation on 28 December 2017. Tensions between the Government of National Accord Deputy Interior Minister Faraj al-Gaem and Libyan National Army forces led to an outbreak of violence on 10 November when four mortars hit the Interior Ministry building in Benghazi. Libyan National Army brigades took control of the building the following day and arrested the Deputy Interior Minister and his supporters. The Deputy Interior Minister has been held incommunicado since 11 November, amid allegations that he has been tortured. The clashes caused 14 fatalities, including at least 1 civilian, and injured 25 people, including at least 4 civilians. On 24 January 2018, a double vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack in the Salmani district in Benghazi claimed more than 30 lives, including children, and dozens were injured. The attack targeted senior security figures of Salafist ideology affiliated with the Libyan National Army. I, along with UNSMIL, immediately condemned the bombings and reiterated that there could be no military solution to the Libyan crisis. In retaliation, on 25 January, Libyan National Army Commander Mahmoud al-Werfalli carried out 10 summary executions. UNSMIL condemned the executions and called for the handing over of Mr. Al-Werfalli pursuant to his arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court. In the days that followed, more than 25 bodies, bearing gunshot wounds and with their hands tied, were found in various places in Benghazi. On 9 February 2018, 2 people were killed and 75 were injured in a bombing inside a mosque in the Majuri district in Benghazi.

19. The situation in Darnah continued to be tense and access to the city remained highly restricted, which has resulted in a worsening humanitarian situation. Areas of the town under the control of the Darnah Mujahadin Shura Council remain under siege by Libyan National Army forces. In the aftermath of the Benghazi bombing and retaliation, the Darnah Mujahadin Shura Council carried out three extrajudicial executions against members of a Libyan National Army cell suspected to be planning targeted assassinations.

20. On 30 October 2017, an unidentified aircraft carried out airstrikes on several positions around Darnah. At least 15 people, including 12 civilian women and children, were killed, and 17 others, including 6 civilians, were injured.

Situation in the southern region

21. The security situation in the south remained precarious. Criminal acts such as robbery, carjacking and kidnapping have frequently occurred in an environment marked by tenuous security and a proliferation of arms. On 3 November 2017, a group of unidentified armed men kidnapped four international workers upon their arrival at Awbari airport. Their status remains unknown. On 12 January 2018, an international aid worker and two Libyans were abducted in the neighbourhood of Abdelkafi in south Sabha city upon their return from Tripoli. All three were subsequently released. Also on 12 January, a Ukrainian doctor was abducted in Sabha and released two days later.

22. The Libyan National Army continued its attempts to enforce its presence in the south following the withdrawal of Misratan forces in 2017. On 27 August 2017, the Libyan National Army issued a decree establishing a military presence in Birak al-Shati', 120 km north of Sabha. On 28 September, armed clashes were reported between the 116th and 160th Brigades of the Libyan National Army over the Sabha oil depot.

23. The issue of foreign armed groups in Libya continues to be a destabilizing factor, particularly in the south-west and south-east. Between 19 and 21 September, clashes took place in Umm al-Aranib town, 100 km south of Sabha, between members of the Tebu tribe and rebels from Chad (Zaghawa tribe) and Darfur. The clashes erupted after the rebels attacked Tamsa checkpoint, 250 km south-east of Sabha, and killed five Tebu tribesmen. On 4 December, the city of Sabha witnessed clashes between Chadian mercenaries and armed men from the Qadhadhfa tribe over the allocation of resources. In the south-east, the Libyan National Army continuously targeted Chadian and Darfurian armed groups along the Libya-Chad border.

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in Libya

24. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) intensified its movements around the former stronghold of Sirte. In response, airstrikes were carried out against ISIL elements by forces from Libya and the United States of America. On 22 September 2017, United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) confirmed six airstrikes against positions in the Khushum al-Khayl area, resulting in 17 ISIL fatalities. Four days later, AFRICOM announced that two additional airstrikes against ISIL militants had been conducted in coordination with the Government of National Accord. On 15 November, the Libyan Air Force carried out two airstrikes against ISIL positions in Harawah, a small town east of Sirte. On 17 November, in a desert area south of Sirte, United States airstrikes targeted ISIL positions, resulting in an undisclosed number of casualties. On 28 November, near Al-Fuqaha' town in Jufrah, the Libyan Air Force targeted an ISIL convoy, which resulted in an unspecified number of casualties. The Libyan National Army declared the area south of the Gulf of Sirte to the Black Mountain, including the oil field sites, a "military zone".

25. On 4 October, ISIL claimed responsibility for an attack against the Misratah courthouse. The attack led to the death of the 3 attackers and 4 people, including 2 civilians, and at least 41 others were wounded. On 8 October, an anti-crime police unit, backed by local security forces from Misratah, arrested six members of an alleged ISIL cell at a residence in Ru'aysat district, in eastern Misratah. Significant amounts of arms and ammunition, including man-portable air-defence systems (MANPADS), were discovered and seized.

26. ISIL claimed to be behind two attacks against Libyan National Army checkpoints in central and southern Libya. On 23 August, there was an attack against a Libyan National Army checkpoint (90 km north-west of Al-Fuqaha'), that resulted in the deaths of nine members of the Libyan National Army and two civilians. On 31 August, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack on a Libyan National Army checkpoint in Nawfaliyah caused two Libyan National Army fatalities and injured four people. On 25 October, there was an attack on another Libyan National Army checkpoint, the "60th Gate", 60 km south-west of Ajdabiya. Two guards from the 152nd Brigade were killed in the attack and four others were injured.

27. On 11 January 2018, in Abu Qurayn town in Misratah, Bunyan Marsus forces announced the arrest of an ISIL member with a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device after he failed to detonate it at the security checkpoint. After his arrest, Ministry of Interior forces in Tripoli established checkpoints and arrested two other suspected ISIL members.

28. While no longer in control of territory, ISIL continues to be active in Libya and retains the ability to conduct complex terrorist attacks. ISIL so-called "desert units" continue to operate in the oil crescent, the central region around Jufrah, as well as in the south of Libya. There are sleeper cells in other parts of the country, including the western region. That presence is augmented by a number of ISIL elements moving into Libya following their eviction from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

Economic situation

29. While economic indicators reflected a significant improvement in the Libyan economy owing to an increase in oil production (1.1 million barrels per day in January 2018, compared with 860,000 barrels per day in August 2017), as well as an increase in international oil prices, structural issues have not been addressed, causing concern that the fiscal and monetary crisis will worsen further in the long term. The National Oil Corporation reached an agreement with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries that granted Libya a continued exemption from measures aimed at cutting global oil output.

30. Libyan authorities have not yet reached an agreement on the budget framework for 2018. The deepening monetary crisis, defined by rising inflation and a loss in purchasing power, required the Government of National Accord to increase spending to provide public services. Currency depreciation hit a record high on the black market towards the end of 2017 reaching 9.8 Libyan dinars to 1 United States dollar, compared with the official exchange rate of 1.39 Libyan dinars to 1 United States dollar. The country's currency rapidly gained value in the informal market following an announcement by the Central Bank that it would increase the supply of foreign currencies available and an announcement by the Ministry of Economy that it would increase imports of non-food items.

31. Political divisions and insecurity further exacerbated the country's macroeconomic instability. The contested vote by the House of Representatives regarding the replacement of the Governor of the Central Bank on 19 December created uncertainty concerning the legitimate authority of the Bank.

32. UNSMIL received reports of pervasive corruption. Abuse of the official exchange rate for instant profit on the black market has driven up prices and created shortages of basic commodities. There are widespread reports of bribes being paid to facilitate transactions. Porous borders have enabled the systemic smuggling of goods, including fuel subsidized for the benefit of the Libyan people, which contributes to the illegal economy.

III. Constitution-making process

33. Members of the Constitution Drafting Assembly were active in their outreach to promote the draft constitution adopted by the body on 29 July 2017. Challenges against the legitimacy of the Constitution Drafting Assembly and the validity of the vote adopting the draft were filed in court. On 7 January 2018, the Southern Benghazi Court rejected a challenge to the continued legitimacy of the constitutional body ahead of a definitive ruling expected by the Tripoli Supreme Court. On 14 February 2018, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the draft constitution, thereby removing all legal obstacles to the holding of a referendum.

34. Libyan and international organizations have worked to support the outreach by the Constitution Drafting Assembly to pave the way for a possible referendum ahead of parliamentary and presidential elections. Particular effort has gone into reaching out to communities opposed to the draft, including some minority groups.

IV. Other activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

A. Electoral support

35. There was significant progress with regard to preparations for elections in 2018. UNSMIL provided advice and support to the High Commission for National Elections and other Libyan counterparts. An exercise to update and expand voter registration was launched on 6 December 2017, on the basis of the voter roll from 2014, which included 1.48 million registered voters. At the time of writing, there were more than 600,000 new registrants following the launch of the exercise, and the number of registered voters was more than 2 million as at 24 January 2018. More than 1 million women had registered to vote, representing 42 per cent of the overall number of registered voters. The registration of out-of-country voters was due to start in early February.

36. UNSMIL established three working groups with international electoral assistance partners on voter registration, public outreach and electoral legislation to coordinate the efforts of the international community in support of the electoral process. In coordination with the High Commission for National Elections, workshops were held to discuss electoral draft legislation aimed at supporting the finalization of an electoral law.

37. Following a request by the High Commission for National Elections, a needs assessment mission, led by the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, was deployed in September 2017. A new electoral assistance project from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was developed to complement the Mission's efforts. The project, entitled "Promoting Elections for the People of Libya", received funding of more than $10 million from the European Union, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands.

B. Human rights, transitional justice and the rule of law

38. Armed groups engaged in ongoing fighting committed violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. The weakness of judicial institutions and the general climate of lawlessness and insecurity hampered victims' ability to seek protection, justice and redress.

39. Ongoing conflicts continued to claim civilian casualties. During the reporting period, UNSMIL documented a total of 135 civilian casualties, including 56 deaths and 79 injuries. Leading causes of death included gunfire, airstrikes, explosive remnants of war, improvised explosive devices and shelling.

40. UNSMIL recorded seven attacks on health-care facilities in Benghazi, Misratah, Awbari, Sabratah, Sirte and Warshafanah. UNSMIL documented physical assaults against medical personnel during the performance of their professional duties, and the unlawful deprivation of liberty of doctors in Bayda', Darnah, Sabha and Tripoli. The Libyan National Army continued to impose restrictions on the freedom of movement of Darnah residents and on the entry of certain goods into the city.

Abductions and killings

41. Armed groups continued to take hostages or otherwise unlawfully deprive civilians of liberty. Civilians were targeted for ransom or on the basis of their family or tribal identity, political affiliations and opinions. Arrests on grounds of violating "public morals" were documented in both western and eastern Libya.

42. In the context of armed clashes in the Gharara area of Tripoli between the Special Deterrence Forces and members of the Al-Mungar family between 16 and 22 October 2017, the former captured three men alive. Their bodies were found days later bearing gunshot wounds. On 26 October, 36 bodies were found in Abyar, some 60 km north-east of Benghazi. Several bore gunshot wounds and signs of torture and had their hands tied. Armed masked men had reportedly seized several victims from their Benghazi homes days or months before their bodies were found. The Libyan National Army announced that it would conduct investigations into the incidents, but no information has been shared.

43. UNSMIL also documented politically motivated assassinations. On 4 January 2018, unidentified assailants shot dead the Director of the Department of Education at his home in Abyar. He had reportedly received death threats after announcing his candidacy for parliamentary elections.

44. At the time of writing, a field commander with the Special Forces in Benghazi, Mahmoud al-Werfalli, had turned himself in to the military police in eastern Libya, but had reportedly been subsequently released, following violent protests demanding his release. On 15 August, the International Criminal Court had issued an arrest warrant against Mr. Al-Werfalli for the crime of murder for his alleged involvement in the summary executions of suspected fighters with the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council and other opponents.

Detention, torture and deaths in custody

45. Across the country, arbitrary detention continued to be widespread in both official prisons and detention facilities controlled by armed groups. In October 2017, judicial police officers estimated that some 6,400 men, women and children were held in 26 official prisons and that some 75 per cent were in pretrial detention. Limited progress was made in reviewing individual cases to ensure that those held were either referred to trial or released, in accordance with Libyan law.

46. UNSMIL conducted six visits to prisons in western Libya and interviewed detainees in private. Despite repeated requests, the Mission was not able to visit the Mitiga detention facility, controlled by the Special Deterrence Force, where some 2,600 people were held in December. UNSMIL continued to receive credible reports of torture and other ill-treatment, poor detention conditions, medical neglect and the denial of visits from family and lawyers. There is a similar pattern of unlawful arrests in eastern Libya. UNSMIL has documented prolonged arbitrary and incommunicado detention, torture, ill-treatment and inhumane detention conditions at Kuwayfiah Prison. UNSMIL has raised concerns in writing and other official communications with relevant authorities. The exact number of detainees held at Kuwayfiah is unknown, as UNSMIL has been unable to visit the facility since its evacuation from eastern Libya in May 2014. In a meeting with UNSMIL in August 2017, judicial police officers estimated that there were roughly 1,800 detainees held at Kuwayfiah. The entire prison compound is guarded by the Libyan National Army and allied armed groups.

Groups in vulnerable situations

Migrants

47. Migrants were subjected to arbitrary detention and torture, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, abduction for ransom, extortion, forced labour and unlawful killings. Perpetrators included State officials, armed groups, smugglers, traffickers and criminal gangs.

48. UNSMIL visited four detention centres overseen by the Department for Combating Illegal Migration, and observed severe overcrowding and appalling hygiene conditions. Detainees were malnourished and had limited or no access to medical care. As at 15 January 2018, there were some 5,200 migrants held in Department centres, down from approximately 19,000 in October 2017, according to the Department.

49. UNSMIL continued to document reckless and violent conduct by the Libyan Coast Guard in the course of rescues and/or interceptions at sea. For instance, on 6 November 2017, members of the Coast Guard beat migrants with a rope and pointed firearms in their direction during an operation at sea. UNSMIL also documented the use of excessive and unlawful lethal force by officials of the Department for Combating Illegal Migration. On 19 November, during a raid on a makeshift migrant camp in the area of Warshafanah, members of the Tajura' and Janzur groups affiliated with the Department for Combating Illegal Migration opened fire on migrants without providing any verbal warning, causing a number of deaths and injuries.

Women

50. Women were arbitrarily detained, often because of family affiliations or for "moral crimes" such as engaging in sexual relations outside of marriage, and were held in facilities without female guards, exposing them to the risk of sexual abuse. Women reported being strip-searched and subjected to intrusive cavity searches by or under the gaze of male guards. Migrant women and girls were subjected to rape, forced prostitution and other forms of sexual violence at the hands of State officials, members of armed groups, smugglers and traffickers. A number of women activists reported facing questioning and harassment when travelling abroad without a male "guardian".

Children

51. UNSMIL continued to receive reports of grave violations against children, including the killing, maiming and abduction of children. During the reporting period, 20 children were killed and 25 were injured. Children were killed as a result of air strikes as well as stray bullets, or were killed or injured in incidents involving explosive remnants of war or unidentified explosive ordnance. The conflict-related abduction of children was reportedly perpetrated by different armed groups, militias and criminal organizations. The recruitment and use of children by armed groups, as well as their detention on the basis of their alleged or actual association with other parties to the conflict, continued to be reported.

Activists and media workers

52. Media professionals, writers and activists faced restrictions to their rights to freedom of expression and association and were subjected to abductions, arbitrary detention, intimidation and threats. On 13 November 2017, fighters affiliated with the Libyan National Army raided the offices of the Libyan Roh Al-Watan television station in Benghazi and confiscated equipment. They also briefly detained two journalists and subjected them to ill-treatment.

53. On 28 August, an event at the "Faqih centre" in Tripoli to launch a collection of short stories and poems by Libyan authors was suspended following warnings that Special Deterrence Force members were heading to the venue with armoured vehicles. On 30 August, the Government's General Committee of Culture criticized the collection's alleged "pornographic and immoral" content and called for legal action against those involved.

Transitional justice and national reconciliation

54. With assistance provided by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund and UNDP, UNSMIL continued to support the national reconciliation process through a comprehensive and inclusive programme. On 20 and 21 September 2017, UNSMIL facilitated a dialogue between representatives from Zintan and Tripoli to reach an agreement providing for the safe return of persons, through a series of security and accountability mechanisms, who were displaced to Zintan from the capital in 2014.

55. Following a reconciliation process between the Qadhadhfa and Awlad Sulayman tribes that began in May 2017, a women's track of the dialogue took place in Tripoli on 6 November. On 26 November, delegations from the cities of Kabaw and Batin al-Jabal in the Nafusa mountains agreed to establish an independent fact-finding committee to investigate past violations and called for the creation of a national land commission. The dialogue laid the basis and set the principles for a future negotiation process between the two neighbouring communities.

56. On 24 October, an agreement was reached between tribal representatives and notables from eastern Libya and Misratah, under the auspices of UNSMIL. The meeting led to the establishment of an official liaison committee between both parties to promote the safe return of displaced communities from Benghazi and Tawurgha'.

57. In December 2017, there were a series of protests by the Tawurgha' against the dire conditions in camps, and against the slow implementation of an agreement between the Misratah and the Tawurgha' on the return of internally displaced persons and reparations that had been endorsed by the Presidency Council in June. On 26 December, the Council announced that displaced persons from Tawurgha' would be able to begin to return to their city starting 1 February 2018. The Council also instructed relevant national security and service institutions to lay the ground for returns and the Central Bank to dedicate funds for the first batch of reparations for victims. Decree 1423 of 2017, issued by the Council on 26 December, established a committee tasked with the implementation of the agreement reached by the Misratah/Tawurgha' dialogue committee in August 2016 on returns and reparations. On 1 February 2018, families from the Tawurgha' community were prevented by extremist elements from returning to their town as had been planned. UNSMIL deplored the threats made against members of that community and called for the implementation of the agreement allowing their return.

58. In December, more than 70 tribal leaders, elders, notables and activists from the south signed a comprehensive "Charter for peaceful coexistence in Fezzan", whereby they agreed on a joint conflict analysis framework and a set of measures, mechanisms and principles to bring peace to the south of Libya. UNSMIL engaged with other southern constituencies to broaden grass-roots support for the Charter.

59. At the national level, a preparatory committee for national reconciliation, established by a decree of the Presidency Council on 14 May, has yet to be activated. On 16 October, the Council issued a decree providing for the creation of a national reparations fund for all conflict-related victims since 2011, but the administrators of the fund have yet to be nominated.

Judicial and penal system

60. Prosecutors, judges and other judicial staff continued to work in a difficult security environment, while attacks on court and prosecution complexes continued, such as the attack against the Misratah courthouse on 4 October 2017. Despite the challenges, a partial reactivation of prosecution and court offices took place in Sirte and Warshafanah.

61. UNSMIL continued to support the strengthening of national institutions. In September and December, UNSMIL, in cooperation with UNDP, facilitated two workshops on arbitrary and prolonged detention, bringing together representatives of municipalities, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, academics, civil society activists, prison managers and judicial police officers.

62. In December, UNSMIL facilitated a week-long training on international human rights law in Tripoli for 17 senior officers of the Libyan Presidential Guard. UNSMIL continued to advise the Presidential Guard on the establishment of an internal compliance and accountability mechanism.

63. Also in December, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in partnership with the Ministry of Justice of Libya and the United States Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, organized a workshop on criminal justice reform that focused on addressing proposed amendments to the Libyan Code of Criminal Procedure. Participants included representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the High Judicial Institute, the Supreme Court, the Office of the General Prosecutor, academia and civil society. On 10 December, UNODC, in cooperation with an Algerian school for penitentiary management, began an in-depth training course for 12 Libyan judicial police officers in Algeria, aimed at strengthening prison management and fostering the social reintegration of offenders.

Human rights due diligence policy

64. The United Nations system in Libya continued its efforts towards the implementation of the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces. UNSMIL and the United Nations country team are currently reviewing their support to Libyan security forces, with a view to mitigating any identified risk that recipients of United Nations support might commit grave violations of international humanitarian law, human rights law or refugee law.

65. On 4 September 2017, the Libya human rights due diligence policy task force adopted a risk assessment with respect to United Nations support to the Libyan Coast Guard. Involved United Nations agencies are currently in the process of implementing several risk-mitigating measures, including increased monitoring, advocacy and accountability. A risk assessment and the development of mitigating measures with respect to United Nations support to the Department for Combating Illegal Migration are currently under consideration.

C. Security sector

Support for Libyan planning for interim security arrangements

66. The relative calm in Tripoli allowed for further implementation of the Tripoli security plan. With continued support from UNSMIL and the European Union Liaison and Planning Cell, both police and army made progress towards greater operational control of the city. Donors committed funds to security-related projects, including technical support to the Libyan criminal justice system, the joint community policing programme of UNDP/UNSMIL and the model police station. Additional support was provided for the Joint Operations Centre in Tripoli. The Presidential Guard is playing an increasingly prominent role in Libyan security affairs. Those "bottom-up" initiatives contribute to creating the conditions necessary to further unify the Libyan security apparatus.

Arms and ammunition management

67. In collaboration with the Mine Action Service, UNSMIL assisted Libyan authorities in their efforts to address the threat posed by the uncontrolled proliferation of arms and ammunition. In Misratah, the Mine Action Service began a stockpile clearance and destruction project. In Sirte, efforts to coordinate the international response to the threat of explosive hazards continued.

68. With a view to enhancing the response to the current humanitarian situation and enabling safe access for internally displaced persons and returnees, UNSMIL and the Mine Action Service organized training sessions for national authorities on institutional and operational capacity-building, including explosive ordnance disposal. The Libyan Mine Action Centre was also supported with the development and implementation of national standards. The Mine Action Service continued its coordination with risk education partners to raise awareness about the dangers posed by explosive hazards. From July to December 2017, approximately 9,000 people participated in such programmes across Libya. The Mine Action Service also continued its women-focused risk-awareness training regarding small arms and light weapons.

D. Women's empowerment

69. During the reporting period, UNSMIL observed a positive trend in women's engagement in various political and social processes throughout the country, coupled with demands for reconciliation at local levels. Three Ministries (Education, Labour and Economy) established dedicated units to support women's empowerment in Libya. UNSMIL provided the women representatives in the joint drafting committee with technical assistance to ensure women's perspectives were reflected in amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement. The representatives succeeded in ensuring that the Women's Support and Empowerment Unit of the Presidency Council reports to the Prime Minister with regard to any future restructuring of the Government.

70. To promote the role of women in Libyan political life and gender sensitivity in the legislative process, UNSMIL supported the establishment of a forum composed of 14 women, which reviewed the draft constitutional proposal from a gender perspective. The forum will present comprehensive recommendations to members of the House of Representatives and the High Council of State in February 2018.

71. UNSMIL, in partnership with UNDP, completed a comprehensive process for designing a peace campaign on social coexistence to be led by Libyan women. Various capacity-building activities continued. In November 2017, an induction training on gender and gender mainstreaming was provided to 20 female staff members of the Women's Empowerment Unit at the Ministry of Education.

E. Young people, peace and security

72. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), discussed a strategic plan for young people for 2018, supported by the Networks of Mediterranean Youth Project, with local partners in a workshop held in Tunis. Within that framework and in collaboration with Libyan youth and women's associations, UNFPA conducted two workshops in Tripoli and Misratah on public policies, as well as training sessions for trainers on civic engagement for social change, sexual and reproductive health, the prevention of gender-based violence and fighting drug abuse. In December,

UNFPA supported the Y-PEER Youth Network in developing its strategy on peer education for young people for 2018. UNESCO conducted training sessions for teachers, cascade training sessions and awareness-raising workshops in Benghazi, Misratah, Sabha and Tripoli that focused on the strategic plan for young people, which were followed up by local microprojects on peacebuilding and countering violent extremism.

F. Coordination and international assistance

73. The overarching coordination framework for international technical cooperation with the Government of Libya, the Senior Policy Committee, created two new working groups on human rights and migration, respectively. A meeting will be convened in Tripoli at the end of February 2018 to take stock of the progress made by the working groups in finalizing sectoral priorities.

74. On 29 November 2017, the United Nations development system, together with humanitarian agencies and Member States working in Libya, gathered 67 national officials from various Libyan ministries and national entities as well as representatives of civil society to discuss a draft strategic framework for Libya for the period 2019–2020. Three priority areas were identified, including governance, social services and economy, with peace and security as the overarching theme and a link to the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations country team was preparing the country assessment and the strategic framework for 2019–2020, which were expected to be finalized with the Government by the end of January 2018.

G. Humanitarian, stabilization and development assistance

75. The humanitarian situation in Libya deteriorated during the reporting period. Refugees and migrants continued to be subjected to violence, forced labour and other grave violations and abuses. Reports of migrants allegedly being sold into the slave trade in Libya shed light on the appalling conditions the majority endure in a climate of impunity.

76. On the margins of the African Union-European Union Summit in Abidjan on 29 and 30 November 2017, a joint African Union, European Union and United Nations task force on migration was established to support migrants and refugees along migration routes as well as inside Libya. In December, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) identified 621,706 migrants across the country but estimates the actual number to be between 700,000 to 1,000,000.

77. IOM has scaled up its voluntary humanitarian returns programme. As at 25 January 2018, a total of 7,723 migrants wishing to return home were repatriated. During the reporting period, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) evacuated a total of 389 refugees and asylum seekers in coordination with Libyan authorities. Approximately 24,000 refugees and migrants reached Italy by way of the central Mediterranean route and some 780 lost their lives or have gone missing. IOM and UNHCR undertook protection monitoring and provided assistance at 12 disembarkation points in western Libya.

78. From September to December 2017, UNHCR registered 2,277 refugees and asylum seekers in Libya. The number of refugees now exceeds 45,000. UNHCR made more than 450 monitoring visits to detention centres throughout Libya, provided medical assistance and advocated for alternatives to detention. Some 1,034 refugees and asylum seekers were released from detention following interventions by UNHCR.

79. Since November, UNHCR has scaled up its resettlement and humanitarian evacuations programme with a view to providing solutions in third countries for the most vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers. Between November and December, a total of 659 refugees were processed through direct resettlement and humanitarian evacuations.

80. Sporadic escalations of violence in western Libya resulted in small-scale displacements and further need for medical support. The World Health Organization (WHO) provided medical supplies that benefited around 90,000 individuals, provided trauma kits that could treat more than 1,600 moderate to severe injuries and procured 42,000 bags of blood. In November, WHO deployed a team of 16 specialized doctors and nurses, provided life-saving medicine and restored services to a hospital in Ghat that had been closed for the past two years.

81. Following the reported increase in maternal deaths in the south of Libya, UNFPA and WHO jointly deployed mobile health teams to enable 1,850 women to deliver safely in the affected areas, and made available emergency reproductive health kits. WHO also supported the Ministry of Health in expanding its disease early warning system network to more than 100 sentinel sites and detention centres across Libya. In November, the Ministry of Health, with the support of WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and IOM conducted a national immunization campaign resulting in about 1.4 million children receiving vaccinations against polio, and 721,488 children receiving vaccinations against measles, mumps and rubella.

82. UNICEF provided 18,350 migrants and refugees with access to safe water and sanitation services at the assembly points of Sabratah/Dahman, Tajura' and Gharyan. It also rehabilitated water and sanitation facilities in 30 schools in Benghazi, Sabha, Awbari, Tripoli and Sirte that continued to provide a conducive learning environment to 19,510 children. In Benghazi and Tubruq, 5,000 internally displaced persons and returnee families gained access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene assistance.

83. UNDP, through its resilience and recovery programme, is working closely with municipalities to build their capacities as legitimate authorities that are responsive to the needs of their populations and able to deliver essential public services. In that context, UNDP worked in key communities on the migration routes (from Sabha and Murzuq to Kufrah and Sabratah, and not least to Benghazi and Tripoli) engaging local municipalities, identifying entry points for the integration of key community members, enhancing local stability and community security, advancing the socioeconomic development of municipalities and providing income generation opportunities for communities, and especially young people.

84. UNICEF provided community reintegration packages to 125 children and adolescents released from armed groups in Zintan. Some 3,500 adolescents participated in sessions on prevention of recruitment by armed groups. In addition, some 70 justice professionals (police officers, judges, prosecutors and social workers) were trained on child-friendly procedures and at least 121 migrant women and children were provided with specialized psychosocial services in Sabratah.

85. During the reporting period, more than 9,000 students (including 4,767 girls and young women) benefited from catch-up and remedial education classes in conflict-affected and underserved areas in places such as Benghazi, Sirte and eight areas in southern Libya. A total of 4,120 children (including 2,120 girls) benefited from the establishment of six mobile classes in Benghazi. In Benghazi and Sirte, 61,315 children (including 31,044 girls) received essential learning materials and supplies. As part of UNICEF support for teachers' development, a total of 187 teachers and master trainers (including 146 women) received training.

86. The Stabilization Facility for Libya received financial contributions amounting to $62 million by the end of January 2018. By the end of 2017, the programme had rehabilitated 22 facilities, including schools, hospitals and sports centres, across Libya.

V. Deployment of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and security arrangements

87. UNSMIL and the United Nations country team have gradually increased their operations inside Libya and maintain a temporary rotational presence of security, support and substantive personnel in the country. On 30 December 2017, the United Nations Guard Unit completed its deployment to safeguard UNSMIL premises in Tripoli. On 7 February 2018, the Department of Safety and Security lifted the evacuation status in Libya.

Security and safety of staff members and operations

88. United Nations personnel in Libya continued to work in a high-risk security environment. Restrictions continued to be imposed on the movement of personnel in Libya and on international staff taking flights to Tripoli and other destinations within Libya.

VI. Observations

89. Since the launch of the United Nations action plan, significant progress has been attained in revitalizing the political process in Libya. The passing of the second anniversary of the Libyan Political Agreement without major incident was a demonstration of the commitment by all parties to the process and the Agreement as the sole political framework to end the transition. In that regard, I strongly welcome the renewed dynamism of Libyan actors and their engagement with my Special Representative. I also welcome the unity of the international community behind the action plan and the efforts of my Special Representative for the establishment of stable, unified, representative and effective governance, as reflected in the statement by the President of the Security Council of 14 December 2017 (S/PRST/2017/26).

90. The mutual recognition of the House of Representatives and the High Council of State and the formation of the joint drafting committee reflected a commitment to reject military solutions and find political solutions as part of a Libyan-owned and Libyan-led process. The meetings of the joint drafting committee concluded in focusing on the need for a more inclusive, representative and effective government to support the end of the transitional period and prepare for elections. It is my hope that a spirit of collaboration and compromise will continue to prevail among all Libyans as they forge the path forward.

91. I am encouraged by the support displayed by Libyans across the country at the prospect of holding elections to conclude the transitional period. The high number of voter registrations, including by women and young people, is testament to Libyans' eagerness to participate in free and fair elections that will mark the end of the transitional period. The United Nations remains committed to supporting the High Commission for National Elections throughout the electoral cycle. However, voter registration is only one of a number of prerequisites needed for elections to take place. It is essential to have broad political consensus regarding the elections in order to encourage both participation as well as acceptance of the results. It is also critical that the appropriate legal framework be in place. I therefore urge the House of

Representatives to uphold its duty to the Libyan people by enacting the requisite legislation, in accordance with the Libyan Political Agreement. The United Nations stands ready to support those processes as needed.

92. I also welcome efforts to hold local municipal elections as the terms of municipal authorities draw to a close. Municipalities have assumed increasing responsibilities not only in governance but also in the provision of basic services. It is therefore paramount that support for those institutions is maintained and further strengthened.

93. My Special Representative has rightly identified the need for meaningful reconciliation to take place in order to rebuild a national polity. Those efforts are key to the reunification of institutions and the restoration of security and stability. In that regard, I join his commitment to engaging and including actors and groups who were previously marginalized and who are now prepared to commit to the political process.

94. I also welcome ongoing efforts by communities across Libya to engage with one another to reach local reconciliation agreements. Those agreements, some of which have been facilitated by the United Nations, are critical to creating the building blocks for reconciliation at the national level. They are also vital for improving the lives of those affected by conflict, as they enable in some cases the return of internally displaced persons to their homes with security and dignity. In that regard, I am encouraged by the announcement of the Government of National Accord to secure the return of Tawurgha' internally displaced persons to their homes. I further encourage the activation of a preparatory committee for national reconciliation and the establishment of a national reconciliation fund.

95. I strongly welcome the active engagement of Libyan women in the political process, as well as in ongoing reconciliation efforts. In that regard, I was pleased to see that women were part of the joint drafting committee. Nonetheless, more needs to be done to ensure that representation of women translates into effective and meaningful participation. I continue to call on all Libyan political actors to strive for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

96. I am concerned by the deteriorating humanitarian situation across parts of the country. I welcome the Libyan Government's allocation of $5 million to the Stabilization Fund and call upon Member States to continue to provide much-needed assistance. In that regard, I urge funding for the Libya Humanitarian Response Plan, which aims to support 1.1 million people in need across the country.

97. I also remain concerned by the underlying insecurity across much of the country. Over the past month, violent clashes in Tripoli resulted in the closing of Mitiga airport for close to a week while Benghazi witnessed bomb attacks on 24 January and 9 February, which resulted in the loss of lives, including those of civilians. I call on all actors to avoid any further deterioration of the security situation and to engage in meaningful dialogue to find a political solution. I reiterate the urgent need to reform and unify armed and security forces, operating under civilian leadership. The widespread proliferation of arms in the country also needs to be addressed, owing to the threat they pose to law and order and the extension of State authority.

98. I take note of the efforts made by Libyan experts to address the continued widespread presence of mines and unexploded ordnance, and express my gratitude to donors who have supported the increase in capacity that has made such efforts possible. Explosive hazards continue to pose a significant, indiscriminate threat to the civilian population and I urge Member States to expand their funding to activities in priority areas through the provision of training and equipment.

99. I am deeply disturbed by the continuing reports of human trafficking in Libya. I encourage the Libyan authorities to spare no efforts to identify and prosecute those responsible for such heinous crimes. I call on all actors to cooperate with and support the efforts of the Libyan authorities to bring perpetrators to justice. The plight of migrants and the abuses they suffer both in Libya and as they attempt to cross the Mediterranean continue to call for joint, concerted and urgent action. I am hopeful that the newly established United Nations, African Union, and European Union task force will help to address the issue of migration in a comprehensive manner. I also commend recent efforts by countries of origin to address the plight of their citizens. United Nations agencies will continue to address the humanitarian situation and have already increased their support to voluntary repatriation and reintegration initiatives. I commend countries that have agreed to host migrants who are unable to return to their countries of origin and are in need of asylum.

100. I wish to recognize the important role of regional organizations and neighbouring States in support of the United Nations facilitation of the Libyan political process. The unity of the international community in supporting a peaceful resolution to the Libyan crisis remains of critical importance. I wish to express my gratitude for the strong support Member States have shown to my Special Representative and encourage them to ensure that the United Nations is able to maintain the momentum generated over the past few months.

101. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Nepal for providing the personnel of the United Nations Guard Unit. I also wish to express my gratitude to my Special Representative, Ghassan Salamé, and to the staff of the United Nations system in Libya for their dedication and hard work in support of a peaceful end to the transition in Libya and the establishment of a stable and effective governance that responds to the legitimate aspirations of the Libyan people.